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ABSTRACT

The Connection, a 15-month demonstration program which provided educational and social services to high-risk adolescents at South High School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is reviewed and evaluated in this report. The program, conducted through a collaborative effort between the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Schools, provided advocacy, tutoring, counseling, job preparation training, job placement, life skills training, chemical management counseling, and recreational and cultural services to adolescents considered at risk with respect to completing high school, becoming involved with the juvenile justice system, or finding suitable employment. The services were provided through structured classes, outreach, advocacy, and direct counseling interventions. Much of the direct service was delivered by part-time paraprofessional college students. Major problems with the Connection were related to organizational, public relations, and communication issues. However, the program received generally positive evaluations from clients and employers. Preliminary data also suggested that the program helped to divert its clients from involvement with the juvenile justice system. Unfortunately, the program's positive effects could not be expanded due to termination of funding. Appendices to the report provide client data, program summary data, evaluation materials, and financial information. (CMG)

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FINAL REVIEW OF VOCATIONAL JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS

Serving high-risk adolescents in the secondary schools

1983

UD 023 334

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A FINAL REVIEW

OF THE

CONNECTION PROGRAM:

SERVING HIGH-RISK ADOLESCENTS

IN THE

SECONDARY SCHOOL

John L. Romano, Ph.D.
University of Minnesota
September 1983

UD023334

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Abstract

This report reviews and evaluates a federally funded program, the Connection, which provided educational and social services to high-risk adolescents at South High School (Minneapolis, Minnesota). The Program started in March 1982 and ended on May 31, 1983. It was funded for $242,140 through a federal intermediary agency called ACT Together, Inc.

The Connection actively served adolescents who were considered at risk with respect to completing high school, becoming involved with the Juvenile Justice System, or finding suitable employment. The Connection provided service for 222 clients as well as many other South High students who were not officially considered Connection clients. The Connection Program services included job preparation training, life-skills training, and chemical management counseling. The services were provided through structured classes and through outreach, advocacy, and direct counseling interventions. Much of the direct service was delivered by part-time paraprofessional college students.

The Program generally received positive evaluations from those acquainted with it. However, the more familiar a person was with the Program, the more positive was the evaluation. From the clients' perspective, the most positive aspect of the Program was the support and assistance it offered, while the least positive was its lack of visibility among the students. Employers who hired Connection clients were very satisfied with the students' performance. Preliminary evidence also suggested that the Program helped to divert its clients from involvement with the Juvenile Justice System.

The Connection's major problems were related to organizational, public relations, and communication issues. These problems, common to new organizations, were intensified by the start of the Program in a high school and community with strong traditions of serving high-risk youth. Another complication occurred because the Connection was housed at South High but financially administered by the University of Minnesota. As the Connection Program matured these difficulties lessened however.

Although the Connection was funded through a joint collaboration between the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Schools, there was little evidence of University involvement at the direct service level. Unfortunately, the potential that initially existed to improve programming for high-risk youth through this joint collaboration was not realized. Future partnerships of this nature should identify and budget for the specific services to be rendered by the University.

Recommendations suggested include: 1) Allowing for greater involvement of school personnel and community agencies in the early stages of program development; 2) Creating an advisory board representing school, community, and business interests to facilitate communication between these groups; and 3) Developing creative job placement strategies to assist high-risk youth find employment.

It was concluded that programming for high-risk youth is necessary in many public schools. The Connection demonstrated a need for such programming, and offered several innovative interventions to assist these students (e.g. Life-Skills class, college students as paraprofessional staff, chemical management services, and a computerized attendance monitoring system). It is regrettable that local and/or federal funding to continue the Connection did not materialize. Society risks greater financial and social burdens in the future by neglecting these youth now.

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"The Program will assist high-risk youth to become more productive, stable, and employable citizens." (from the Connection proposal, October, 1981)

The Connection Program, selected as a federally funded national demonstration project, was designed to provide social services and educational assistance to secondary school adolescents who were considered at risk with respect to completing high school, finding suitable employment, and becoming negatively involved with the Juvenile Justice System. The Program began its 15-month federal funding period in March 1982. When federal funds ended on May 31, 1983, the Program also ended. This paper represents a final review and evaluation of the Connection Program. It will summarize the Program, highlight strengths and weaknesses, and offer recommendations emanating from the Connection's experience.

The Connection Program was initially developed and proposed for funding by the University Day Community (a day treatment program for adolescents with behavioral/learning problems) in collaboration with Minneapolis Public Schools, specifically, South High School. The University Day Community is administratively sponsored by and affiliated with the General College of the University of Minnesota. The General College is the open admissions College of the University, admitting students regardless of their prior educational history. In order to facilitate student achievement, the General College utilizes a variety of teaching/counseling interventions such as academic tutoring, career/educational counseling, and small group instruction.

South High School is one of the largest Minneapolis Public Schools and is located in an area of the city with a large concentration of high-risk youth. According to the Connection proposal, the school drop-out rate is 33%, 25% of the households receive welfare assistance, and the area is "characterized by high unemployment." The 1980 census (as reported by the Connection proposal) estimated the racial composition of the area to include 16% American Indians, 5% Blacks, 1% Spanish surnames, and 79% Whites. The Connection Program was housed at South High School among approximately 1700 students and 175 faculty and staff.

The Connection proposal and eventual funding brought together two of the major educational institutions in the metropolitan area, Minneapolis Public Schools, and the University of Minnesota. More specifically, this project linked South High School and the General College, both with distinguished histories of serving by-passed, underprepared, disadvantaged and high-risk youth. The potential existed for a unique collaboration and

dialogue between secondary and post-secondary educators because of this relationship between South High School and the General College.

The Connection Program was selected, funded and administered by a federal intermediary agency called ACT Together, Inc. ACT Together was funded by two federal agencies (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Department of Labor) and by private sources. The Connection received $242,140 from ACT Together; direct and in-kind contributions from other sources were estimated at $181,956 (see Appendix H for specific budget information). The Connection was one of 13 proposals selected from approximately 500 received.

While adolescence is generally considered a period of life characterized by turmoil and conflict, for some youth the difficulties encountered during these years are intensified by social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors. These factors when added to the normal adolescent adjustment difficulties may contribute to patterns of behavior which can create serious adjustment and educational problems. While the secondary schools make efforts to attend to these "high-risk" youth, the environmental and educational problems of these adolescents are such that without special school resources they are often not served very effectively or efficiently. Consequently, these adolescents can become casualties of the educational system, leaving school prematurely without attaining the necessary skills to find and keep appropriate employment. In a continuing escalation of difficulty, the problems continue for these youth as they are forced to face the realities of a complex and often hostile society lacking adequate skills and personal resources. At a relatively young age, they may develop problems associated which chemical mismanagement, criminal activity, poverty, unwanted pregnancy, and unhealthy peer and family relationships. These problems then help to perpetuate a cycle of poverty and societal maladjustment which may have been experienced by others in their family.

The Connection Program offered the promise of breaking this cycle by focusing specifically on high-risk youth and by providing them with the specialized educational, vocational, and counseling services which are usually not offered in the traditional high school. In the original Connection proposal high-risk was defined as any adolescent possessing two or more of the following characteristics:

- juvenile offender
- chemical abuser
- below average reading level
- unemployable

- teenage parent
- recipient of public assistance or social security benefits
- physically handicapped
- English as a second language
- minority group member
- emotionally disturbed
- school dropout
- more than 5 credits behind high school graduation progress
- former recipient of residential treatment

These criteria, with the exception of below average reading level and unemployable were used to select Connection clients. Criteria added to the list included youth who were economically disadvantaged, runaways, and sexually exploited.

To serve these students, the Connection Program developed the following objectives:

(1) To assist high-risk youth become more productive, stable, and employable citizens.

(2) To offer a cost-efficient, comprehensive service program to meet the needs of high-risk youth.

(3) To facilitate private and public sector cooperation (especially between the schools and businesses to promote high-risk youth employment).

(4) To employ paraprofessionals to deliver cost-effective services with benefits to both paraprofessionals and clients.

(5) To utilize cost-effective student monitoring and staff accountability systems.

(6) To facilitate cooperative community funding of programming for high-risk youth.

(7) To bring about continued funding for the Connection Program (especially with the involvement of the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Schools) after the federal grant monies end.

These objectives were to be realized through the following Connection Program components:

(1) Employment and Training Component - to include counseling for career/vocational exploration, pre-employment training, and job placement.

(2) Advocacy and Counseling - to provide counseling/advocacy for personal, family, legal, and chemical management difficulties.

(3) Educational Component - to include tutoring and educational counseling.

(4) Life-Skills Training - primarily offered through a credited class which included information/discussion about personal financial management, chemical/alcohol use, and legal and employment issues.

(5) Chemical Management Component - to provide individual and group counseling to students needing assistance with chemical management problems.

(6) Recreational and Cultural Services - to include recreational activities and field trips.

(7) Community/School Involvement Component - to work cooperatively with school services and community agencies to facilitate the development of programs for high-risk youth.

(8) Information/Evaluation Component - to monitor weekly progress of the Connection clients and to share this client information with Connection staff.

The services offered through the components were provided by the following staff positions (the percentage of time fluctuated for some positions):

- Executive Director (50%)
- Program Coordinator (100%)
- Information Systems Manager (50%)
- Paraprofessional Coordinator (80%)
- Chemical Management Counselor (83%)
- Job Developer (100% until March 31, 1983)
- Work Coordinator/Vocational Education Teacher (100%)
- Transitional Counselor (100%)
- Secretary (100%)
- Two Outreach Workers (20% each)
- Receptionist (50%)

A unique aspect of the Connection Program was the employment of paraprofessionals to deliver much of the tutorial, advocacy, and counseling services. The paraprofessionals (the number varied from six to nine) were either undergraduate or graduate students recruited from local colleges and the University of Minnesota. Generally, they were students in a human services type training program and had a strong interest in the helping professions. The paraprofessionals were employed from 12 to 25 hours per week.

This review and evaluation is divided into several parts. The preceeding introduction summarized the Program and its develop-

ment. The next two sections will discuss the evaluation design and present results of evaluation data. The final sections will discuss the results and present recommendations and conclusions.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Plans for an evaluation of the Connection Program began with the development of the grant proposal, as an evaluation plan was included in the original proposal. The original evaluation plan was reduced substantially, however, due to budget reductions made prior to the start of the Program. The revised evaluation design called for a less comprehensive and sophisticated plan which would make greater use of ACT Together's data gathering and compilation system. The evaluation plan adopted consisted of six stages:

A. Development of a Comprehensive Plan

This phase included review of the Connection proposal (dated October 2, 1981) and Addendum (dated January 7, 1982) and interviews with all Connection staff during the first months of the Program. The interviews were designed to focus on staff evaluation needs and to elicit staff cooperation with implementing the evaluation plan. A tentative plan was developed, reviewed by the Connection staff, and modified. The evaluation plan was finalized in October 1982 and disseminated to the Connection staff and other interested parties (see Appendix E).

B. Mid-Year Evaluation

In February 1983, a mid-year evaluation of the Connection Program was completed. The mid-year evaluation consisted of statistical summaries of client characteristics, client program goals, and program utilization. It also included summaries of personal interviews with 28 individuals involved with the Connection Program. These interviews queried the individuals about the strengths and weaknesses of the Connection, the Program's ability to meet its objectives, and the functioning of the Program as an organization. Appendix F presents the Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations from the Mid-Year Evaluation. This evaluation was disseminated widely and was used for staff development, Program inprovement, and fund raising purposes.

C. Final Evaluation

This final review and evaluation focuses on the total Connection Program during its 15-month existence. It provides:

(1) Summary data about clients and their use of the Program;

(2) Results of evaluation questionnaires completed by Connection clients, staff, and others involved with the Connection;

(3) Information about Connection client employment sites and student employer evaluations;

(4) Discussions of the data collected and recommendations for future programming for high-risk adolescents.

D. Dissemination of Final Evaluation

The final evaluation will be disseminated to individuals and agencies who were involved with the Connection. It will also be made available to other communities and agencies, especially those who wish to replicate all or parts of the Connection Program. Finally, the report will be disseminated nationally through the appropriate Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

RESULTS

The results section is divided into four parts: Part 1 presents demographic data about the Connection clients and their utilization of the Program. Part 2 reports the results of an evaluation questionnaire completed by Connection staff and other professionals associated with the Connection. Part 3 summarizes results of an evaluation questionnaire completed by Connection clients. Part 4 provides information about Connection client employment sites and employer evaluations about the students' work performance.

Part 1: Connection Client Demographic Data and Program Utilization

Data compiled and summarized by ACT Together showed that, from March 1982 through March 1983, 189 youths were identified as Connection clients. Data for the last two months of the Program were not available from ACT Together. However, the Connection staff identified 222 youths as Connection clients from March 1982 through May 31, 1983, the final day of the Program. Table 1 (see Appendix A) presents demographic information about Connection clients through March 1983. Table 1 shows that 50% of the clients were 16 to 17 years old, and that females were represented more often than males. Just under 50% of the clients were white, while American Indians were the

largest single minority group (39%), followed by Blacks (9%). Most of the clients were 10th graders or above (87%), were living with either their family or relatives (92%), and were single (94%). Although 73% had previous work experience, about 60% were unemployed.

A summary of client characteristics showed that 58% were economically disadvantaged and 39% were receiving public assistance. Over 33% were school dropouts, and 30% were identified as substance abusers. The Connection clientele were also represented by: (1) youth with a history of running away (22%), (2) adolescents with behavioral/emotional disorders (21%), (3) abused/neglected youth (17%), and (4) learning disabled students (16%). While 14% of the Connection clients were adjudicated juveniles and 16% had incurred status offenses, 23% were diverted from the judicial system.

Table 2 (see Appendix A) presents the data compiled by ACT Together showing the Connection Program Components used by Connection clients from March 1982 through March 1983. The Components most utilized were the Employment and Training Component (used by 149 students or 79% of the clients), the Education Component (used by 175 clients or 93% of the clients), and the Life-Support Component (including 101 students or 53% who received assistance preparing for independent living). A review of specific services within each component showed that 140 students received pre-employment training, 134 clients received life-skills training, and 118 received vocational/career counseling. Further, 702 contacts were made with employers to locate possible jobs for the students. Of these employer contacts, 65 (9%) hired Connection clients. Altogether 95 Connection clients found jobs; of this number, 39 were CETA subsidized and 56 were unsubsidized. The Education Component data showed that 148 youth were placed in an alternative school program, the vast majority within South High School alternative school programs (i.e. Partnership and Linkage). A high percentage of the youth received counseling for educational reasons (83%), personal concerns (68%), and job/career development (65%).

In addition to the services provided for the Connection clients, the Connection staff also recorded services delivered to students who were not officially identified as Connection clients. These data were compiled and are summarized in Table 3 (see Appendix A). Table 3 shows that many South High students were served by the Connection Program. For example, South High students received 791 units of outreach and walk-in counseling services from the paraprofessional/advocates. In addition, 282 classroom presentations were made by the Connection staff.

Since the data reported by ACT Together did not include the final two months of the Program, Appendix B presents data

compiled by the Connection staff through May 1983. These data showed that 222 students were identified as Connection clients; of those students who were officially terminated by the Program, 75% experienced positive terminations. The average stay in the Program was nearly 21 weeks. Job placements were realized by 113 clients and 32 graduated from high school. Only 27 students dropped out of the Program, representing 14% of the total terminations.

The Connection staff also gained access to Juvenile Court records to identify any court contacts that the Connection clients may have had. These data are also reported in Appendix B. They show that 63 (32%) of 196 terminated Connection clients had a history of at least one court contact, but the majority of these clients (51) had court contacts more than six months prior to their admission to the Connection Program. Only 11 clients had court contacts during their stay in the Program, and 10 clients had court contacts up to 6 months after completing the Program.

Part 2: Evaluation Questionnaire Completed by Connection Staff and Other Professionals

At the end of the Connection Program, 47 indiviuals were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire about the Program. The individuals were assured that their responses and comments would not be identified in the final report and that only the Project Evaluator would know the identity of each questionnaire responder. Of the 47 individuals contacted, 20 were former or current Connection staff members, including 7 paraprofessional/advocates. Fourteen individuals were employees of South High School or Minneapolis Public Schools. Seven were employed by community agencies. Four people were employed by ACT Together and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in Washington D.C. Two individuals were employed by General College, University of Minnesota. Appendix G identifies the individuals surveyed and includes the questionnaires, cover letter, and summary results. Out of the 47 individuals surveyed, 43 (91%) returned a questionnaire. One person chose not to respond citing a lack of familiarity with the Connection Program, and three others did not respond despite repeated follow-ups. The respondents had varying amounts of familiarity with the Connection Program. While 68% indicated very strong or strong knowledge about the Program, 33% had moderate knowledge about the Program. Of those in the moderate or less group, only 3 out of 14 respondents indicated "minimal" or "very minimal" knowledge about the Program.

The individuals returning questionnaires evaluated the Connection positively on the following:

(1) Effectively carried out its goals and objectives (72% strongly agreed, 19% could not say);

(2) Effectively served high-risk youth at South High School (79% strongly agreed or agreed);

(3) Effectively used paraprofessionals to serve students (77% strongly agreed or agreed);

(4) Achieved its goals and objectives (70% strongly agreed or agreed, 19% could not say).

The Program was evaluated less positively on:

(1) Effectively communicated and cooperated with personnel and programs at South High (69% strongly agreed or agreed, 14% were neutral);

(2) Effectively communicated with community personnel and programs (57% strongly agreed, 17% could not say);

(3) Fostered cooperation between Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota (67% strongly agreed or agreed, 12% could not say).

A high percentage of the respondents indicated that a program similar to the Connection Program belongs in the public schools (88% strongly agreed or agreed), and that a program like the Connection should be housed at South High School (79% strongly agreed or agreed, 12% could not say).

Because the respondents varied in their familiarity with the Connection, another analysis compared the responses of those with "very strong" or "strong" knowledge of the Program to those with "moderate", "minimal", or "very minimal" knowledge of the Program. Table 4 compares the questionnaire responses of the two groups.

Table 4

Questionnaire Response Percentages Comparing Respondents with Strong (S) Knowledge (N=29) of the Connection to Those with Moderate or Less (M) Knowledge (N=14)

Question	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Can't Say	
	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M
(1) Effectively carried out goals and objectives.	93	29	3	7	3	7	-	57
(2) Effectively served high-risk youth.	96	43	3	14	-	21	-	21
(3) Effectively communicated with South High School.	83	46	14	15	-	23	4	23
(4) Fostered co-operation between South High & Univ. of Minnesota.	79	42	14	29	-	7	7	21
(5) Effectively communicated with community agencies.	71	28	7	21	7	28	14	21
(6) Effectively used paraprofessionals.	89	50	3	14	3	14	3	21
(7) Achieved its goals & objectives.	86	36	3	14	3	7	7	43
(8) Program to serve high-risk youth belongs in public schools.	100	61	-	-	-	23	-	15
(9) Program similar to Connection should be housed at South High.	97	43	-	7	-	21	3	29

The comparison between these two groups of respondents is revealing. Those with much knowledge about the Program were much more favorable toward it compared to those with less knowledge about it. For example, while 93% of the strong knowledge group agreed that the Program effectively carried out its goals and objectives, only 29% of the moderately knowledgeable group agreed with this statement.

In addition to answering the objective questionnaire items, respondents were asked to identify the major strengths and weaknesses of the Connection Program. The major strengths most often identified were: (1) the exceptionally skilled and caring staff that was assembled to serve the Connection clients, (2) the services offered to these students (especially the job training/placement, counseling, and paraprofessional services), and (3) the Program's relationship to the Minneapolis Public School System. The Program was also cited for its replication potential and its role in facilitating private sector and community cooperation.

The major weakness most often cited was the Program's communication and public relations difficulties within its own staff, within the school building, and within the community. Other problems identified were those associated with starting a new program within the school and the shortness of the funding period.

The 17 current professional and paraprofessional Connection staff were also asked to complete a questionnaire which focused on their participation in the Program (see Appendix G). Of the 16 individuals responding, almost everyone agreed that they: (1) had effectively carried out their component goals; (2) were satisfied being a member of the Connection Program; and (3) were satisfied with the data gathering functions of the Connection. These individuals were also asked for suggestions which could improve a program like the Connection. The following suggestions were offered:

(1) Facilitate better communication among program staff.

(2) Encourage stronger initial involvement of the school.

(3) Facilitate stronger involvement of community agencies.

(4) Select a program staff which is representative of the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the clientele.

(5) Hire a full-time Director and full-time fund raiser.

(6) Allow for more time to start-up the program.

(7) Increase public exposure of the Program.

(8) Avoid duplication of existing services.

(9) Increase numbers of outreach workers.

(10) Improve group cohesiveness among the students within the program.

Part 3: Evaluation Questionnaire Completed by Connection Clients

During the last several weeks of the Program, Connection clients were asked to complete a Connection Program evaluation questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were obtained from 44 Connection clients, representing 20% of the 222 Connection clients (as reported by the Connection staff) served during the 15 months. The questionnaires were completed without names; however to encourage completion, the questionnaires were often administered individually by the Program's paraprofessional/advocates. Appendix C presents the questionnaire and the student responses.

The data from the students should be interpreted somewhat cautiously, however, since respondents were volunteers, creating a sampling bias. A review of respondent demographic information showed respondents to be somewhat older and represented more by females compared to the total number of Connection clients served through March 1983. There were also fewer American Indian and more white student respondents compared to the total number of clients served. However, despite the lack of representativeness of the sample, the data do provide some information about how the students viewed the Connection Program.

The majority of the student respondents (61%) indicated that they used the Program "a little" while 36% used it "much" or "very much". The helpful parts of the program according to the students were those parts which:

(1) helped to prepare for a job (43%)

(2) helped to stay in school (30%)

(3) helped with personal problems (27%)

(4) helped to clarify educational goals (27%)

Students indicated that the most helpful parts were those which prepared them for a job and helped them with personal problems, while the least helpful was that which prepared them for a job. Overall, 53% of the students rated the Program either extremely, or very, or moderately helpful. Further examination of this latter questionnaire item showed that those students

who used the Program "much" or "very much" rated it more helpful compared to those who used it "little". Table 5 presents this comparison.

Table 5

Client Responses, Grouped by Program Use, to the Question: Overall, How Helpful Has The Connection Program Been For You?

	Very Much/Much (N=16)		Little (N=25)	
	N	%	N	%
Not Helpful	0	-	4	16
Little Helpful	1	6	13	52
Moderately Helpful	2	13	4	16
Very Helpful	9	56	4	16
Extremely Helpful	4	25	0	-

Table 5 shows a direct relationship between Program use and student reactions to it. Of those students who used the Program a lot, 81% found it "very" or "extremely" helpful, while only 16% of the students who used the Program "a little" rated it as highly. The majority of the group who used the Program "a little" indicated receiving "little" or "no" help from the Program (68%).

Students also volunteered comments about the Program (see Appendix C). Out of the 29 individual comments, 22 were positive and seven were classified as neutral. None were negative. The positive comments focused on the friendly and helpful staff and the staff's ability to empathize with the students. As one student put it:

> "It's a good place to be. The teachers treat you like equals not pupils and you can talk to them, almost like their real people!"

Another student wrote:

> "I like the Program because it understands me."

The neutral comments focused primarily on not knowing about the Program. One student wrote:

> "I don't even have a clear mind of what the program is. I think it should be explained more and get the students more involved."

Another student commented:

> "I don't know what it is!"

Part 4: Connection Client Employment Sites and Supervisor Comments

Appendix D lists selected employment sites of Connection clients. A review of this list shows that students were employed in a variety of establishments. Many were employed in the fast food/ restaurant industry (e.g. Burger King, The Manor, Sammy D's), others in large industrial complexes (e.g. Control Data), and some in the public sector (e.g. Post Office and South High School). The types of jobs varied and included waitress/ waiter, gas attendant, maintenance worker, and cashier. Most of the jobs paid between $3.00 and $4.00 per hour. Supervisor comments about the student employees were most positive. The following are examples of employer evaluation comments:

(1) Very good. One of the foremost workers I've had the privilege of working with.

(2) Great kid. An asset to our store.

(3) Works well with others and work is satisfactory.

(4) We will miss her very much when she leaves. Good worker.

(5) Conscientious worker. Prompt.

(6) Glad to have her in our employ.

(7) A very good, dependable worker. Very cheerful to have working here.

(8) Very neat and reliable. Got a raise. Doing good. Accepts supervison well.

(9) Punctual, nice personality.

(10) Not missed a day yet, and I have been pleased to have him on our staff.

(11) Showing considerable progress. I'm very happy with her.

(12) Conscientious worker. Pleasant and well mannered with customers.

Employment Program Employer Evaluation Reports (used by Minneapolis Public Schools) were also quite positive about the student workers. This report (see Appendix D) rates students on nine criteria, including ability to follow instructions, ability to get along with people, quality of work, and appearance. On a five item scale (five the highest), the majority of supervisors rated the students at the three or higher level on all criteria (see Appendix D). Unfortunately, these reports were available for only a few student employees.

DISCUSSION

A large amount of data was accumulated about the Connection Program and the students it served. The information collected included statistical data as well as subjective reactions to the Program from those who were most involved with it. This part of the manuscript will discuss the data and implications for programming for high-risk youth.

The 222 students identified as Connection clients represented about 13% of the total student population at South High. In addition, services were also available to students who were not officially listed as Connection clients. For example, 362 individual counseling sessions with non-Connection clients were held and 282 classroom presentations were made. These numbers when combined with selected client characteristics (e.g. 34% school dropout, 58% economically disadvantaged, and 30% substance abuser) demonstrate that the Connection services were utilized by students they were designed to serve as well as by other students. In fact, one wonders how these students are served by the school without a program like the Connection. The Connection's ability to show a strong need for the type of programming it offered is a credit to the Program and its data maintenance system. There was little disagreement among those queried that the Connection or a program similar to it is needed at a school like South High where large numbers of students with special needs are enrolled.

Perhaps the greatest strengths of the Connection Program were its commitment to serve high-risk youth and the staff that was assembled to provide the services. The dedicated and skilled staff was the major ingredient which kept the Connection together despite a number of public relations, organizational, and bureaucratic problems that burdened the Program.

One staffing innovation was the employment of local college students for the Program's direct service components. These paraprofessional/advocates aggressively kept in contact with the Connection clients and helped them locate needed services. They provided guidance and friendship to the students and actively advocated for them. The Connection clients, many of whom had not been accustomed to receiving this type of attention and support in the schools, were very appreciative of the assistance given by the paraprofessional/advocates.

While the employment of college students as paraprofessionals offers advantages, such as being cost-effective and offering the opportunity for college students to act as role models for their younger clientele, there are risks and disadvantages. To reduce the risks, the paraprofessionals must be carefully selected, given a thorough orientation to the program and their role in it, and provided with continuous training and close supervision throughout their employment. While the paraprofessionals employed by the Connection were well selected, it appears that they could have been more effective if they had received a stronger orientation to the Program and given regular and formalized training throughout their employment. A major disadvantage with employing college students is that their collegiate schedules usually take precedence over their employment schedules. Therefore, they may not be available for staff meetings and other Program activities. They also may terminate employment before the end of the year, creating a disruption of service delivery. It is most advantagous for these types of employees to be employed at least 15 hours per week and to make a 12-month commitment (10 months for school based programs) to the program.

Another major innovation of the Connection was the Life-Skills class. This class provided a structured opportunity for students to receive information and guidance about lifestyle issues (e.g. money management, chemical management, leisure/recreational activities). Unfortunately, due to staffing and budgetary problems, the class was not offered during the last trisemester of the school year. The class could have been delivered more effectively if only one instructor was responsible for it, instead of having the instructional duties shared by several. While having several individuals responsible for different parts of a class has some merit, this format makes it more difficult for students to develop a strong relationship with any one instructor. It may also create more difficulty developing group cohesiveness within the class. A preferred model would employ one teacher for the class, with the use of periodic guest speakers to address some topics.

In addition to the Life-Skills class, students also received

job preparation training through the Program. This training appears to have been effective for those students who did find jobs. Employer comments about these students were generally very positive. The fact that these students performed well in an employment setting is especially note-worthy considering that they were defined as "high-risk" adolescents. Employers described the students as punctual, responsible, pleasant, energetic, and enthusiastic. Most teachers would be pleased to have such students in their classrooms. While the employers evaluations were encouraging, not all employers completed them. Therefore, the employer satisfaction results are tentative. More firm conclusions await more complete data.

Major efforts were made to locate employment settings for the Connection students. A total of 702 employers were contacted either by mail, by telephone, or in person. As of March 1983, less than 10% of these contacts yielded employment for the students. This appears as a low return on the effort put forth, especially considering that 60% of the job placements were government subsidized. While it is acknowledged that the local and national economic conditions made job placements extremely difficult, perhaps other strategies need to be developed and implemented to find more employers willing to hire these youth. Although the methods used by the Connection yielded some jobs, the data suggested a need for improved strategies in this area.

According to data collected by ACT Together and the Connection staff, the Connection was used extensively by students. However, from the students' perspective, their use of the Program was low (60% of the respondents indicated that they used the Program "a little"). Also, 39% of the student questionnaire respondents indicated that the Connection was of "little" or "no help" to them. These data were not very favorable, especially considering that the sample may have been biased in favor of the Connection. However, a closer examination of the questionnaire responses was revealing. Of the 16 students who used the Program "much" or "very much", 13 (81%) indicated that it was "extremely" or "very" helpful to them and of the 25 students who used the Program "little" 17 (68%) indicated that it was of "little" or "no" help to them. Therefore, those who used the Program more were more likely to indicate receiving help from it. This finding is not particularly suprising, since those who use services are generally more likely to perceive them positively. However, the operating structure and philosophy of the Connection Program added a complication to the interpretation of these data. Many students had a strong identification with the Partnership Program (another program at South High for high-risk students) and even though these students were receiving services funded by the Connection, they

were encouraged to continue their identification with Partnership. Since the Connection made little effort to have these students become identified with the Connection, the students were not aware of their status as Connection clients. This partly explains why some students were not aware of the Connection or the services that they received through it.

Other indications of student reactions to the Program were the comments which they volunteered. Most of these comments were positive, none were negative, and a few were neutral. The positive comments focused on their relationship with the staff and the personalized attention received. The neutral comments indicated a lack of awareness and knowledge about the Program and the students' relationship to it.

Taken collectively, the student evaluations suggested that students were moderately pleased with the Connection. Since the Connection did not encourage strong student identification with it, the Connection functioned as a Program and delivered services without many of its clients knowing that they were Program clients. Two other factors also contributed to low Program visibility: the Connection delivered services without a large administrative structure and without a large physical facility. One advantage of the low Connection visibility was that the students were able to use the services without the Program excessively intruding into their lives. However, there likely were two major disadvantages created by the low visibility of the Program. First, students who needed the Program may not have known about it. While the Connection staff made strong efforts to locate and serve appropriate clientele, self-referrals probably did not occur very often. Second, the Program's low visibility contributed to its public relations problems both within the school building and in the community. Teachers and others, not knowing very much about the Program may have viewed it as unnecessary and ineffective. They also may have been less willing to refer appropriate students to the Connection. Questionnaire responses from professionals involved with the Program support this conclusion. Of the 14 individuals who indicated a "moderate" or less knowledge about the Connection, only 61% agreed that a program like the Connection belongs in the public schools; and only 43% agreed that the Connection had effectively served high-risk youth. Of the 29 individuals who had much knowledge about the Connection, 100% and 93% respectively agreed with these statements.

It is quite clear that the Connection Program provided needed services to South High students and used a variety of innovative techniques to reach students. The major problems that the Connection encountered were due primarily to it being a new program at South High and the shortness of the grant period

(i.e. 15 months). Unfortunately, the Connection began to offer services without having had sufficient time to describe its mission and goals to other personnel and programs at South High and in the community. Although there was much contact between the administrators of South High and the Connection Executive Director during the process of obtaining the grant, once the Program began, others needed to be educated about its purposes and goals. Further, the Program lacked sufficient time to solidify its own internal organization before services were offered to students. These initial "start-up" difficulties, common to most new organizations, were complicated further for the Connection by the following factors:

(1) The funding cycle (March 1982 - May 1983) necessitated the Program starting at the end of the 1982 school year, slowing down during the Summer, and then starting again in the Fall. Since many faculty, staff, and students were new to South High at the start of the 1982-83 school year, much of the communication/public ralations work begun the previous Spring had to be repeated.

(2) Since the Executive Director of the Connection and some of the Program staff were new to South High, they lacked strong relationships with other staff and faculty. Much effort was expended developing and strengthening relationships and gaining Program credibility within the building, and in the community. Some school and community personnel viewed the Connection as an unnecessary addition to other, more permanent, school and community programs for high-risk youth. The need for a temporary 15-month program was questioned, while others seemed to perceive the Connection as a threat to their own programs. Questions like, "Why start a new program when the money could better be used for existing programs with similar goals to the Connection?" were asked by some school personnel and community agencies. At least part of the answer was the Connection's belief that it was offering a unique and innovative program which did not duplicate existing programs and services. These problems, related to Program credibility and need, as well as issues of territoriality within the school building and community, led to several communication and public relations difficulties between the Connection Program and existing programs and personnel both within the school and in the community. Unfortunately, it is likely that the time and energy given to correct these misunderstandings detracted from the overall services delivered by the Connection.

(3) The Executive Director was budgeted for only 50% time. Therefore he was not always available to respond to issues and problems as they occurred. While a full-time Program Coordinator was eventually hired and available in the building to supervise the day-to-day operation of the Connection, her

decision making powers were limited. Further, there was confusion among the staff initially about supervisory responsibilities and lines of authority. This ambiguity led to some communication problems among the Connection staff. As the year progressed, however, these staff communication problems improved.

The Connection attempted to facilitate communication and collaboration between the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Schools for the purpose of programming for high-risk adolescents. This relationship was to have enhanced the services provided to the students. However, the potential that initially existed to improve programming through this partnership was not realized. While the University was involved at administrative levels, and the Program Evaluator was a University faculty member, at a service or programmatic level the University was not directly involved. Apart from sponsoring the Connection and thereby helping to secure the grant, it was difficult to find any University involvement at a direct service level. Although some Connection staff and paraprofessionals were affiliated with the University, their University affiliation was not a critical factor in their involvement with the Connection. Potentially, however, the University could make important contributions to Connection type programming. For example, University faculty could apply their expertise and provide materials to improve services. They could also assist in the training of paraprofessionals and the professional development of other staff. University equipment and technology could be shared with the high school. University personnel could provide some specialized service which is not currently available to the high school students. Perhaps most important, a stronger University-High School relationship could facilitate meaningful articulation of eduational goals and objectives between the two educational institutions. It appears that the University involvement with the Connection contributed to some of the bureaucratic delays and problems while adding little to the direct educational and social services of the Connection. One way to insure meaningful University faculty and staff involvement in the future is to budget for their specific services and expertise from the beginning of the program.

The Connection Program, through the client data gathering system (ACT Together Learning Access System -- ATLAS) and the use of paraprofessionals, was able to closely follow clients throughout their stay in the Program. The Connection was also instrumental in securing a computer for the primary purpose of monitoring student attendance at South High. The computerized attendance monitoring system, which was implemented in March 1983, allowed for early identification of absenting students. As students were identified, interventions were made by the Connection staff

before the student had accumulated too many absent days. The computer was also to be used by Connection staff for other educational purposes. However, since it arrived late in the school year, it was used only minimally for instructional or guidance purposes.

The Connection Program's ability to secure the computer and facilitate its use for early identification of absenting students was an important, if not very visible, contribution of the Program. It is important that potential school dropouts be identified early and interventions implemented to prevent their withdrawal from school. Securing and implementing the computerized monitoring system was a necessary first step in this early identification process.

The elaborate ATLAS data gathering system required a substantial amount of staff time, especially at the beginning of the Program. While the system may be necessary for national demonstration projects, it appears too cumbersome and too elaborate to be used regularly by programs. It is likely that a less elaborate, less time consuming system would serve individual programs just as well. The time, money, and energy saved from data gathering could then be channeled into direct services. Further, the uses to be made of any data collected should be determined beforehand, thereby avoiding the inefficient practice of collecting unnecessary data.

The Connection Program proposal demonstrated very effectively that a number of people and agencies from both the private and public sectors could come together and support a program to serve high-risk youth. The authors of the proposal marshalled extensive community, University, and School District support, and this support contributed to the eventual funding of the proposal. The initiatives of the proposal authors in gathering this support merit strong commendations. However, the early support did not lead to the development of local funds to continue the Program once the federal grant monies ended. Despite personal initiatives and the submission of grant proposals to local agencies and corporations to continue the Connection services at South High, at this writing none have materialized. The reasons for this lack of monetary support are not clear. Certainly the Connection and other programs at South High (e.g. Partnership) have demonstrated a need for such services. The youth are there and South High has demonstrated a strong commitment to serving high-risk youth. One pessimistic interpretation for the lack of funds is the low priority that programming for high-risk youth is given both within the School District and community. This interpretation, if correct, is extremely short-sighted. It likely will create greater financial burdens for the community in the future, not to mention the loss of human resources.

It is important that programs of this nature be evaluated, especially given the skepticism that some people have about the need for and effectiveness of them. However, meaningful and appropriate evaluations are difficult to implement. For example, well controlled experimental studies are not very feasible, and longitudinal follow-up research is costly. For these reasons, it is not known what effect, if any, the Connection Program had on the school dropout rate of its clientele. Also, to determine the impact of the Connection services on students' future education and employment records will require a follow-up study of the Connection clients.

Although this evaluation did not employ a sophisticated research methodology, it did demonstrate that a large percentage of South High students used the Connection services, and many indicated that they benefited from the Program. Further, those students who found employment were praised by their employers. Finally, preliminary evidence suggested that the students' negative contacts with the Juvenile Justice System decreased. Despite these encouraging results, they should be viewed as tentative; educational/social services programming for high-risk adolescents demands more extensive study to gain a greater understanding of its impact and effectiveness.

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

During its 15 month existence, the Connection Program effectively served a large number of high-risk students at South High. It provided a variety of educational and social support services including job preparation training, counseling, and tutoring. The Program not only provided services to the clientele it was designed to serve, but it also served other students. Although it tended to have low visibility as a program, nevertheless many students received needed services as a result of the Connection.

From the start, the Connection was burdened by a variety of bureaucratic, public relations, and communication problems. The fact that it was able to respond to these difficulties while providing services is a credit to the leadership of the Program and its dedicated staff. Fortunately, as the Program matured these problems decreased and near the end of the funding period the Program was less occupied by them.

Despite much effort to secure continued funding for the Program, no funds had materialized as of October 1, 1983. In fact, it appears that all funding for high-risk adolescents at South High was decreased for the 1983-84 school year.

Without specialized services for these youth their chances of completing high school and finding appropriate employment are significantly reduced. Unfortunately, not providing funds for these services now may result in greater financial and social burdens to the community and society in the future.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on this review and evaluation of the Connection Program. They are offered as suggestions to improve programming for high-risk youth.

1. The secondary school is an appropriate environment through wich to serve high-risk youth. However, the school must provide specialized educational and support services to effectively meet the students' needs. The school has the potential to use its internal resources and external political strength to assist high-risk adolescents. However, unless a long term (e.g. 3 - 5 years) financial commitment is made to a program, the effort demanded to keep it funded will detract from direct services and create credibility problems within the school building and community.

2. The effort and time needed to start a new program should not be underestimated. A period of 4 - 6 weeks is a reasonable period in which to hire staff, develop operating procedures, consult with individuals and agencies from both the school and the community, and complete physical space needs. For school based programs, the school calendar should coincide with the program. An 11 month program with nine months of service delivery and at least one month each before the start and end of the school year would eliminate the calendar problems which the Connection faced.

3. Any new program must be extremely sensitive to the school and community environment in which it will operate. Other programs, agencies, and personnel should be consulted widely from the earliest stages of the program's development. While such consultation is extremely time-consuming, it will reduce the time spent correcting misunderstandings and altering attitudes at later stages. Special attention must be given to existing programs which offer similar services or serve a similar clientele. It generally is more advantagous to expand or refocus an existing program rather than start a new one. Financial and programmatic gains can be realized for the target population by not duplicating existing services and programs.

4. A program of the magnitude and complexity of the Connection requires a full-time Director. While this position would increase program administrative costs, some of the Director's time could be given to direct service to reduce administrative costs. It is important that a person with decision-making power be readily available to respond to inquiries and crises as they occur.

5. One of the strongest components of the Connection was the use of paraprofessionals to serve as advocates, counselors, and friends to the adolescents. These college students were able to develop strong relationships with the high school students. They were seen by students as persons in the system who strongly advocated for them. Further, the paraprofessionals, close in age to the clients, acted as role models to the students.

   The paraprofessionals need to be selected carefully, closely supervised, and given a strong program orientation with on-going training. Their backgrounds and characteristics (e.g. sex and race) should represent, if possible, the backgrounds and characteristics of the students they serve. Ideally, the paraprofessionals should also make a year long commitment to the program. Short term employment of paraprofessionals is not cost-effective and contributes to a perception of a lack of stability of the program by both clientele and other professionals.

6. The Life-Skills class which provided guidance and information to Connection clients was also a strong innovation of the Program. This class gave students information about life-style matters (e.g. money management, health, recreation) in a structured format. It also allowed for class discussion about these important topics. Although the Connection used a model for teaching the course which involved several different individuals teaching different topics, using one main teacher with periodic guest speakers is a better model. This latter format would allow greater cohesiveness to develop within the class. The use of paraprofessionals to contribute information and share personal experiences with the students is an excellent use of the paraprofessionals. Also, by involving the paraprofessionals in class, the students are given an opportunity to become acquainted with them in a less intense atmosphere than may occur in an individual meeting.

7. The Connection Program demonstrated that high-risk adolescents can make good employees. The Connection's Employment Component not only prepared students for jobs, but also searched for prospective employees. Much of the job preparation training, like the teaching of life-skills, was

delivered through a class. Thus the training was formalized and regularly scheduled for the student.

Although the Connection made many efforts to locate jobs for students, these efforts were not rewarded very strongly with actual job placements. Clearly, other strategies need to be found to locate employers and to encourage them to hire these youth. The employer evaluations of Connection clients could be used for developing future employment possibilities. Also, an advisory board, made up of local business people, may help to develop employment opportunities for these youth.

8. The Connection Program initiated a computerized system to monitor student school attendance. The main advantage of this system was that students who were not attending school could be easily identified so that a Connection advocate could contact them and offer assistance. Since early identification of potential school dropouts is critical to prevent their permanent withdrawal from school, a computerized attendance system should help reduce the number of school dropouts.

   The paraprofessional/advocates also closely monitored the Connection clients. They actively sought out students and offered interventions when appropriate. It is important that those who work with high-risk students actively seek them out rather than passively wait for students to find the services. Although some students may dislike the loss of anonymity, the close monitoring of these students can help to prevent problems from occurring or from becoming serious if problems do develop.

9. The chemical dependency services were important to the overall Connection Program. Adolescents like those the Connection served are often struggling with chemical and alcohol management issues more than other adolescents. Having available resources where they can gain information, discuss privately their concerns, and be referred for treatment, if necessary, is most important to the development and performance of these students. The Connection Program discussed chemical and alcohol management in the Life-Skills class, provided chemical awareness groups for students and parents, and offered chemical management counseling. Since chemical and alcohol abuse have created major problems for adolescents and their families, providing outreach, informational, guidance, and referral services through the schools is an important component of specialized programs for high-risk youth.

10. The involvement of the University of Minnesota with the Connection Program seemed sound theoretically, but the practical impact of the Universty on the Program was minimal. The potential that existed for this partnership between the University and the public schools was never fully realized. While the University was involved administratively with the Program, it was only minimally involved at a direct service level. There is much to be gained from increased collaboration between post-secondary and secondary educators. However, the involvements and services need to be budgeted and specified at the beginning of the program. The University faculty could possibly be involved by sharing expertise and materials, providing training for program staff, consulting on program evaluation issues, and offering direct services to the target population. Further, University and school administrators can help increase communication between educators at different educational levels by facilitating regular dialogue about educational goals, objectives, and programming for high-risk youth. Unless another major institution (like a university) will be meaningfully involved with a program in the secondary schools, it is best that it not be involved because it only creates another bureaucracy with which the program has to deal. The Connection administration had to consult with two major bureaucracies which at times was awkward and time-consuming. A further complication for the Connection was, that while the grant was administered by the University, the Program operated in a public school, creating some conflicts between the needs of the school and the regulations of the University. Future programming should avoid a program serving two masters, unless it is necessary and important to do so.

11. The Connection was requested by ACT Together to collect data about the clients it served and the Program components used. Especially at the beginning of the Program, the amount of effort expended in data collection was greater than merited in terms of what the Program received for the effort. Programming of this nature necessitates collecting data about its clientele and service utilization, but only data which will be used in meaningful ways should be gathered. Data needed for program evaluation and accountability purposes should be collected as well as data needed to make programmatic decisions. The data generated by the Connection Program consumed much staff time. Unless data will be used meaningfully, staff time can better be given to serving clients.

12. Despite efforts to secure additional funding, the Connection Program was not successful in generating local funds to keep itself functioning. Neither the School District nor

private sources provided funds to keep at least some of the Connection services operating. It is unclear why this occurred. However, several explanations are possible. They include:

(a) Financial decision-makers do not view these types of programs to be either necessary, important, or effective for high-risk youth;

(b) Neither the schools, nor public agencies, nor private enterprises will assume leadership responsibility to provide services for high-risk youth;

(c) The Connection leadership did not adequately pursue funding possibilities;

(d) The nature of the economy and the spirit of the times made fund-raising for these types of services especially difficult.

Perhaps the Connection did not begin early enough to develop future funding possibilities. Were the resources of the School District and the University utilized strongly enough to help secure local financial support for the Program? Could ACT Together have exerted more influence locally? These questions remain unanswered. However, the strategies used by the Connection to keep itself funded were not successful. These strategies need to be closely examined to determine how they could have been improved.

13. The Connection Program may have benefited in several ways by developing a Community Advisory Board as a consulting body. This Board, composed of community, school, and business representatives, may have helped the Connection resolve more quickly its public relations problems. It also may have helped to locate employment opportunities for the Program's clientele and to generate monies for the Program's continuance. Perhaps most important, such a Board would demonstrate that programming for high-risk youth is a shared community responsibility, and, as such, requires the involvement of many segments of the community. Neglect of these youngsters now may lead to greater cost to the community in the future, as well as a loss of human potential.

CONCLUSIONS

There is little question that community programs to serve high-risk youth are needed. The public schools are appropriate places for such programs to be located. The Connection served many students both directly and indirectly during its existence. While it struggled with organizational growing pains, it did impact the students it served. The staff was highly dedicated and skilled in working with difficult adolescents. Despite insecurities related to Program acceptance and future funding, the staff functioned in a very professional manner. It is regrettable that the services provided by the Connection were not continued. The adolescents who need Connection-type services will be even more disadvantaged without them, and the community/society will incur greater losses if these youth do not develop skills and maximize their human potential. Hopefully, ways will be found to provide funding for the needed services.

The Connection demonstrated one model which has much promise. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funding, the Connection only partially realized its full potential. It is likely that the Program would have continued to stabilize, refine its interventions, and gain greater acceptance within the school and community if it continued to function. The type of adolescents served by the Connection have many needs which demand specialized services to prevent these youth from becoming casualities of our educational system.

Appendices

Appendix A

Table 1: Connection Clients

Table 2: Connection Program Components Used by Connection Clients

Table 3: Non-Connection Clients Receiving Connection Program Services

Table 1

Connection Clients
(March 1982 - March 1983) [1]

Total Number of Clients - 189

Age	Number	Percentage [2]
14-15 years	37	21
16-17 years	87	50
18-20 years	49	28
Missing	16	--
Sex		
Male	76	45
Female	94	55
Missing	19	--
Ethnic Group		
White	83	49
American Indian	67	39
Asian/Pacific	2	1
Black	16	9
Hispanic	2	1
Missing	19	--
Educational Level		
9th Grade	17	10
10th Grade	46	27
11th Grade	57	34
12th Grade	45	26
Post-secondary	5	3
Missing	19	--
Residential Status		
Living with family/relative	159	92
Living independently	8	5
Other residential care	6	3
Missing	16	--

1 Data compiled by ACT Together and available only through March 1983 at this writing.

2 Percentage based only on those reporting the information.

Table 1, cont.

Marital Status	Number	Percentage [2]
Single	163	95
Married	10	6
With dependents	8	5
Missing	8	-

Employment Status	Number	Percentage [3]
Employed, out of school	0	0
Employed, in school	55	29
Unemployed, out of school	5	3
Unemployed, in school	110	58
Previous work experience	138	73

Offenders	Number	Percentage [3]
Youthful offender (18-21 yrs.)	4	2
Adjudicated juvenile (17 yrs. and below)	27	14
Pre-adjudicated juvenile (17 yrs. and below)	4	2
Diverted from judicial system	44	23
Status offense	30	16
Serious or violent offense	2	1

Client Characteristics	Number	Percentage [3]
School dropout	65	34
Runaway	42	22
Involved in sexual exploitation	12	6
Placed in protective custody	15	8
Abused/neglected	32	17
Substance abuser	57	30
Behavioral/emotional disorder	39	21
Developmentally disabled	1	1
Physically handicapped	5	3
Teenage parent	11	6
Pregnant	2	1
Learning Disabled	30	16
Economically disadvantaged	109	58
Public Assistance	73	39
Limited English Speaking	3	2

[2] Percentage based only on those reporting the information.
[3] Percentage based on 189 clients.

Table 2

Connection Program Components

Used by Connection Clients

(March 1982 - March 1983) [1]

I. Employment and Training Component (149 clients used this component)	Number
Pre-employment training	140
Life-Skills training	134
Vocational/Career exploration	118
Vocational training	1
Total Job placements	95
a. Total permanent part-time	50
1) subsidized	1
2) unsubsidized	49
b. Total temporary	45
1) subsidized	38
2) unsubsidized	7
Employers contacted for jobs	702
Employers employing Connection clients	65
II. Education Component (175 clients used this component)	
Placed in alternative school	148
Placed in traditional school	30
G.E.D. classes	2
High school/other completion	7
Evidence of upgraded academic skills	8
III. Counseling/Therapy Component (180 clients used this component)	
Job/Career development	122
Educational counseling	157
Substance abuse	50
Family life education	29
Family counseling	30
Group counseling	69
Personal counseling	129
Streetwork contacts with youth	2
Days of outreach services	85

[1] Data compiled by ACT Together and available only through March 1983 at this writing.

Table 2, cont.

IV. Life Support Needs	Number
Provided food	3
Received medical care	4
Assisted/Prepared for independent living	101
Provided residential services	4
a) Long term residential (30 days +)	1
b) Foster care	2
c) Independent living	1

V. Recreation/Cultural Arts	
Recreational Arts	42
Cultural Arts	17

VI. Legal Services	
Court counseling	12
Diversion	5
Restitution	4
Probation	7

VII. Follow-up	
Positive terminations (0-6 months), employed	5
Others terminated (0-6 months), employed	2

Table 3

Non-Connection Clients

Receiving Connection Program Services [1]

(March 1982 - May 1983)

Type of Service	Number
Outreach and walk-in counseling services	791
Tutorial services from advocates	290
Services from subsidized chemical counselor:	
a) Chemical Awareness class	40
b) A.A. Group	14
c) Ala-teen Group	18
d) Parent contacts	86
e) Classroom presentations	282
f) Individual counseling sessions	362
g) Parents enrolled in Drug Awareness Program	22

[1] Data compiled by Michael Rothweiler (Connection Program) June 1983.

APPENDIX B

Connection Summary Data

Connection Summary Data [1]

The following information was obtained through a content analysis of Connection client files. It is not meant to be inclusive but to complement the aggregate ATLAS system monitored by ACT Together and also provide an early basis for service evaluation. When ACT Together has completed their summation of submitted individual client/program data and it is received by General College a more thorough profile evaluation will be possible.

TOTAL DESIGNATED CONNECTION CLIENTS = 222

Designated clients refer to all persons receiving services from the Connection Program and either: 1) completed intake; or 2) completed goal sheet; or 3) were included on Connection client list; or 4) received substantial service but did not complete necessary paperwork and were not counted as Non-Connection clients receiving outreach or walk-in counseling as reported in the ATLAS monthly reports.

DESIGNATED CONNECTION CLIENTS COMPLETING INTAKE = 183

This represents 82% of all designated clients. Reasons for not obtaining intake information vary. They include: refusal of client to give information, inability to perform intake during regular public school hours, avoidance of client, dropout or absenting problem, and confusion of Connection staff as to who is responsible for completing intake with client.

INTAKE GOAL SHEETS COMPLETED = 174

This represents 78% of designated clients, 95% of clients completing intake, and 89% of clients terminated.

TOTAL TERMINATIONS = 196

This represents 88% of the designated clients. Of the 183 receiving intakes, 176 (96%) were terminated. Some of the designated clients were terminated under ATLAS line items even though intakes were not completed. Other designated clients and 7 clients receiving intakes were "dead filed" due to various reasons, mainly imcomplete paperwork.

POSITIVE TERMINATIONS = 144

This represents 73% of all clients terminated. Of the 144 positively terminated, 99 (69%) were transferred and enrolled in another agency (mainly the Partnership Program) and 74

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1 Compiled and written by Michael Rothweiler and Lynette DeMarre (Connection Program), July 1983.

(51%) had job placements in either the public or private sector.

OTHER TERMINATIONS = 52

This represents 27% of all clients terminated.

TOTAL CLIENT SERVICE MONTHS = 1011

This represents an average stay by terminated clients of 5.2 months.

GOAL SHEETS COMPLETED AFTER TERMINATION = 168

This represents 86% of all clients terminated.

TOTAL IN EMPLOYMENT TRAINING = 156

This represents 80% of all clients terminated.

TOTAL SUBSIDIZED JOB PLACEMENTS = 47

This represents 24% of all clients terminated. Of these 47 job placements, 36 (77%) individuals had positive terminations.

TOTAL UNSUBSIDIZED JOB PLACEMENTS = 66

This represents 34% of the clients terminated. Of these 66 job placements, 53 (80%) individuals had positive terminations.

TOTAL JOB PLACEMENTS = 113

This represents 58% of clients terminated. Of these total job placements, 74 (65%) individuals had positive terminations. 16 individuals had both subsidized and unsubsidized job placements and of these 16 individuals, 15 (94%) were positive terminations.

TOTAL RECEIVING WORLD OF WORK ORIENTATION = 51

This represents 26% of the clients terminated.

TOTAL RECEIVING LIFE SKILLS TRAINING = 104

This represents 53% of the clients terminated.

TOTAL RECEIVING ADVOCACY SERVICES = 133

This represents 68% of the clients terminated.

TOTAL RECEIVING COUNSELING SERVICES = 181

This represents 92% of the clients terminated.

TOTAL RECEIVING CHEMCIAL COUNSELING = 50

This represents 26% of the clients terminated.

TOTAL RECEIVING LEGAL COUNSELING = 12

This represents 6% of the clients terminated.

TOTAL RECEIVING RECREATIONAL/CULTURAL SERVICES = 61

This represents 31% of the clients terminated.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS WHO DROPPED OUT OF THE PROGRAM = 27

This represents 14% of the total number of terminations and 52% of the other terminations.

TOTAL NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES = 32

This represents 16% of the clients terminated.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS WITH HISTORIES OF NEGATIVE COURT CONTACTS = 63 [2]

This represents 32% of the clients terminated. Of the 63 clients, 43 (68%) received positive terminations. Of the remaining 20, 15 (75%) of those with other or negative Connection terminations had court contacts more than six months prior to admission to the Connection Program. This was the highest frequency of negative court contacts.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS WITH NEGATIVE COURT CONTACTS MORE THAN SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO ADMISSION = 51

This represents 26% of all clients terminated.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS WITH NEGATIVE COURT CONTACTS 3 - 6 MONTHS PRIOR TO ADMISSION = 10

This represents 5% of all clients terminated.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS WITH NEGATIVE COURT CONTACT 0 - 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO ADMISSION = 7

This represents 4% of all clients terminated.

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[2] It should be noted that this court data is not inclusive. Those persons who turned 18 years old during the project and were not under Juvenile Court jurisdiction were not included since a court order to review adult court records was not obtained. Also, final court contact review of all Connection clients will not take place until November 1983, 6 months after final termination of all Connection clients.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS WITH NEGATIVE COURT CONTACTS DURING STAY IN THE CONNECTION PROGRAM = 11

This represents 6% of all clients terminated.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS WITH NEGATIVE COURT CONTACTS 0 - 2 MONTHS AFTER TERMINATION = 6

This represents 3% of all clients terminated. Of these 6 individuals having negative contact 0 - 2 months, one also had negative contact 3 - 6 months.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS WITH NEGATIVE COURT CONTACTS 3 - 6 MONTHS AFTER TERMINATION = 5

This represents 3% of all clients terminated.

APPENDIX C

Connection Client Evaluation Questionnaire,

Questionnaire Responses, and Comments

Connection Students: South High

Directions: Please take a few minutes to answer these questions about the Connection. Your answers and comments will help in our evaluation of the Program. Thank You.

1. Sex:
   Male ___
   Female ___

2. Grade:
   9th ___
   10th ___
   11th ___
   12th ___
   other ___
   (specify)

3. Age:
   _____
   (years)

4. Ethnic Group:
   ___ American Indian
   ___ Asian/Pacific
   ___ Black
   ___ Chicano/Latino
   ___ White
   ___ Other (specify)

5. How much have you used the Connection Program?
   ____ a little; ___ much; ___ very much

6. How has the Connection Program been helpful to you? (check all that apply)

___ a. helped me prepare for a job
___ b. helped me find a job
___ c. helped me stay in school
___ d. helped me get better grades in school
___ e. helped me with personal problems
___ f. helped me clarify my educational goals
___ g. helped me clarify my career goals
___ h. helped me find needed resources and assistance
___ i. helped me with legal problems
___ j. helped me with chemical awareness
___ k. made contacts with my family or parents
___ l. other (specify) _____

7. From those that you checked in Question #6 above, which were most and least helpful to you? (write in letter only)

_____ Most Helpful; _____ Least Helpful

8. Overall, how helpful has the Connection Program been for you? (circle one)

a) not at all helpful
b) a little helpful
c) moderately helpful
d) very helpful
e) extremely helpful

9. Please make any other comments about your experience this year with the Connection Program. For example, what did you like most and like least? How can the Program be improved? (use the reverse side if necessary)

_____
_____
_____

Evaluation Questionnaire Completed by Connection Clients

I. Respondent Information (N=44)

A. Sex	Number	Percentage
Females	28	64
Males	16	36
B. Age		
14 - 15 years	2	5
16 - 17 years	33	75
18 - 20 years	9	20
C. Grade		
9th	1	2
10th	12	27
11th	22	50
12th	9	20
D. Ethnic Group		
American Indian	13	30
Black	4	9
White	27	61
E. How Much Have You Used The Connection Program?		
A little	27	61
Much	12	27
Very much	4	9
No response	1	2

II. Questionnaire Responses (N=44)

A. How has the Connection Program been helpful to you? (check all that apply)	Number	Percentage [1]
Helped me prepare for a job	19	43
Helped me find a job	6	14
Helped me stay in school	13	30

[1] Percentage based on 44 respondents.

	Number	Percentage
Helped me get better grades in school	13	30
Helped me with personal problems	12	27
Helped me clarify my educational goals	12	27
Helped me clarify my career goals	8	18
Helped me find needed resources and assistance	7	16
Helped me with legal problems	3	7
Helped me with chemical awareness	6	14
Made contacts with my family or parents	9	20

B. From those that you checked above, which were most and least helpful to you?

	Most		Least	
	N	%	N	%
Prepare for a job	9	20	6	14
Find a job	3	7	2	5
Stay in school	6	14	1	2
Get better grades	2	5	0	0
Personal problems	8	18	3	7
Clarify educational goals	4	9	2	5
Clarify career goals	3	7	3	7
Find resources & assistance	2	5	2	5
Legal problems	2	5	1	2
Chemical awareness	3	7	3	7
Contacts w/family/parents	2	5	3	7

C. Overall, how helpful has the Connection Program been for you?

	Number	Percentage
Not at all helpful	4	9
A little helpful	13	30
Moderately helpful	6	14
Very helpful	13	30
Extremely helpful	4	9
No response	4	9

Evaluation Comments

Of Connection Clients

Positive Comments

1. I feel that the Connection Program is good for the students. For lots of reasons it works with the students not against them. They met our schedule, not us to them.

2. It's a good place to be. The teachers treat you like equals not pupils and you can talk to them, almost like their real people!

3. If I go on to school, I want to see Delphine.

4. I think the Connection Program is a good place for the students to go and get help with their problems in school, family, or whatever.

5. As much as I know about the Program, I think it's very helpful to students in need of necessities. So I think it's a very good program.

6. More classes in Connection other than employment and life skills; more young advocates with a sense of humor like Lynette; more teachers like Beth Wood; Heryla is great; same operation as Partnership -- give students better classes -- activities in class instead of just doing work by themselves; having students watch out for each other and be able to interact more in class.

7. I like the program because it understands me.

8. I liked the people and what they taught except one person who compared us to two year olds. The best class to me was Mike's. He talked about anything you wanted to -- sex, drugs, and Rock & Roll. I hope other people get in this class. I hope they keep it going.

9. The people in the Connection office are nice. I enjoyed stopping in the office the few times I did stop.

10. What I liked most is the hay ride and the people that work here are nice and caring people, and what I didn't like most was the work. The work is alright, the people help you with it, sometime you'll have to do it on your own, and then we have fun playing some games, we all pitch in together and made it work.

11. The Connection Program has given me a lot of helpful

advice and support during the year, when things get really tough and I couldn't take things anymore. Overall I didn't think there is anything that should be changed.

12. Very helpful, teachers nice, advocates make me happy -- they always have a smile.

13. Colleen helped me a real lot with my problems. I think that we need a Connection Program at every school. I know that they love me and I love them.

14. I liked it when the people talked to me all the time and helped me.

15. I'm really glad I've had the chance to experience what I've never experienced in school and that's having an advocate (Lynette). Lynette was so helpful and sweet I can't thank her enough. Lynette helped me to prepare for a job, she talked to me about how to approach Magnet counselors, she helped me find needed resources and assistance and I'm so happy! Thanks, Lynette. P.S. Love ya, Connection.

16. They talked to me and helped me when I had a problem.

17. I think it was one of the best classes I have had. They cared for people and offered help all the time.

18. It was really exciting and somewhat fun when we work on budgets and the field trips. I really like being in the Connection Program. I have nothing bad to say about the Program.

19. I am not in the Connection Program but I am in Mr. Heryla's class and I like it a lot. Mr. Heryla is a good teacher.

20. I had the most fun on the hay ride and the Program is all right. You don't really need to change the Program unless you want to.

21. I sort of liked the class where we learned a lot about drugs. It gave me a lot of helpful information.

22. It has been very fun and has helped me a lot.

Neutral Comments

1. You need more people.

2. I don't know what it is!

3. Notify more students about the services the Connection offers! Many students need jobs and help applying for higher educational institutions.

4. It can be improved with steady funding.

5. I am not involved with the program.

6. I don't even have a clear mind of what the program is. I think it should be explained more and get the students more involved.

7. I don't know what the Connection Program is.

Appendix D

Selected Employment Sites

of Connection Clients

and

Employer's Evaluation Form

Selected Employment Sites of Connection Clients

Abbott Northwestern Hospital
Birchwood Nursing Home
Bridgemans
Burger King
Cedar Pines Nursing Home
Clark Gas Station
Control Data (clerical)
Currie Center
Donaldson's (checker/marker)
Ear Mold Design (secretary)
Fanny Farmer (porter)
Federal Home Loan Bank (clerical)
Grey's Drug Store
Hamburger Joint (waitress)
Landscaping
Main Grain (cashier)
The Manor (bus bird)
Market Fair (stocker & bagger)
Montanitas (bus boy)
Moto Gas
Native Indian Center
Park Lane Car Wash (cashier)
Parks Lake Car Wash (gas attendant)
Penny's Motors (runner)
Phelps Park
Post Office
Ragstock
Sammy D's
Snyder's Drugstore
South High School (office aid)
Super Value (bagger)
Trinity Church (maintenance)
Tuff-Kote (cleaning)
Winchell's Donuts (waitress, cleaning)
Woolworths
Wreath Shop

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION
Employer's Report

Name of Student _____ Employer _____ Date Report is Due: _____

TO THE EMPLOYER: It will be of great help to the school in planning further training for this young worker if you will complete and mail this report to make it available for the next marking period. Read it carefully. On each line place one check mark over the phrase which describes this worker most accurately. If you think the individual is about halfway between two descriptions, make your mark about halfway between then on that line. Any additional comments you wish to make will be helpful.

_____, Coordinator _____ High School

1. Ability to follow instructions	1 Seems unable to follow instructions	7 Needs repeated detailed instructions	5 Follows most instructions with little difficulty	4 Follows instructions with no difficulty	4 Uses initiative in interpreting and following instructions
2. Ability to get along with people	1 Frequently rude and unfriendly — uncooperative	9 Sometimes lacks poise and understanding — seems indifferent	6 Usually gets along well with people	2 Usually poised, courteous tactful in working with people	2 Unusually tactful and understanding in dealing with all types of people
3. Attitude toward appearance of work station	10 Maintains careless, slovenly work station	4 Allows work station to become disorganized	2 Follows good housekeeping rules	Takes pride in appearance and arrangement of work station	Keeps work place outstandingly neat and efficiently organized
4. Cooperation	9 Uncooperative, antagonistic — hard to get along with	3 Cooperates reluctantly	5 Cooperates willingly when asked	Usually cooperates eagerly and cheerfully	Always cooperates eagerly and cheerfully without being asked
5. Industry	10 Always attempts to avoid work	4 Sometimes attempts to avoid work	Does assigned job willingly	Does more than assigned job willingly if given directions	Shows originality and resourcefulness in going beyond assigned job without continual direction
6. Quality of Work	11 Does almost no acceptable work	3 Does less than required amount of satisfactory work	Does normal amount of acceptable work	Does more than required amount of neat, accurate work	Shows special aptitude for doing neat, accurate work beyond the required amount
7. Dependability	5 Unreliable, even under careful supervision	9 Sometimes fails in obligations even under careful supervision	Meets obligations under careful supervision	Meets obligations with very little supervision	Meets all obligations unfailingly without supervision
8. Appearance	4 Slovenly and inappropriately groomed	8 Sometimes neglectful of appearance	5 Satisfactory appearance	Neat and appropriately groomed	Exceptionally neat and appropriately groomed
PROGRESS	8 Fails to do an adequate job	6 Lets down on the job somewhat	2 Maintains a constant level of performance	Shows considerable progress	Shows outstanding progress

STUDENT JOB TASK LIST: _____

_____

_____

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

Days absent_____ Days tardy_____

59

50

60

Signature of Rater

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
An Equal Opportunity School District

Appendix E

An Evaluation Plan For

The Connection Program

AN EVALUATION PLAN FOR THE CONNECTION PROGRAM

I. Connection Program Objectives

A. To assist high-risk youth become more productive, stable, and employable citizens.
B. To offer a cost-efficient, comprehensive service program to meet the needs of high-risk youth.
C. To facilitate private and public sector cooperation (especially schools and businesses) to promote high-risk youth employment.
D. To employ paraprofessionals to deliver cost-effective services with benefits to both paraprofessionals and clients.
E. To employ cost-effective student monitoring and staff accountability systems.
F. To facilitate cooperative community funding of programming for high-risk youth.
G. To facilitate continued funding for the Connection Program (especially with the involvement of the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Schools) after the federal grant monies have been exhausted.

II. Based on the above objectives, the evaluation will focus on the following broad questions:

A. What components of the Connection Program are <u>most</u> and <u>least</u> effective in serving high-risk youth?
B. What are the implications of offering a social service program such as the Connection Program within a public school setting?
C. How can the public high schools and the University most effectively relate to each other to provide educational assistance to high-risk youth?
D. What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the Connection Program? In what ways can it be improved?

III. The broad general questions translate into the following more specific questions (left side) and the methods to gather data on the questions (right side).

QUESTIONS	METHODS
A. To what extent have the Connection Program services been made known to high-risk youth in the South High School area?	
1. How has the service been publicized?	1. Publication and advertizing methods used (e.g. flyers, posters, newsletters, presentations)-what has and has not been effective?
2. How many high-risk youth referrals have been made to the Connection Program?	2. Number of referrals and who is making them - from the intake form. Secretary.
3. What programs, agencies, and individuals are making the referrals?	
B. To what extent have the Connection Program services been used by high-risk youth in the South High School area?	
1. How many high-risk youth have been served by the Connection through direct services?	1. High-risk youth served directly from ATLAS data.
2. How many high-risk youth have been served indirectly? (e.g. Connection impact on the school and community)	2. High-risk youth served indirectly. Assess the impact of Connection Program on school and community (e.g. advocate for high risk youth, strengthening of existing South High programs, paraprofessional use throughout the school).
C. How has the Connection Program served high-risk youth?	

QUESTIONS	METHODS
1. What are the direct services offered? a) Educational b) Pre-employment c) Employment d) Transition e) Personal/social (e.g. chemical awareness, family, inter/intra personal functioning)	1. Listing of Connection Program components - strengths and weaknesses. Questionnaires to component staff.
2. What are the indirect services offered to high-risk youth?	2. Listing of indirect services offered.
3. How satisfied are high-risk youth with the direct services offered?	3. Client satisfaction questionaires (e.g. Life Skills class, Employment Component). 4. Follow-up questionnaire to former Connection clients.
D. How has the Connection Program related and cooperated with other programs and personnel within South High School and Minneapolis Public Schools? 1. Linkage and Partnership Programs 2. Other social services at South High 3. South High School Guidance office 4. South High School administration 5. Minneapolis Public Schools District office 6. South High School instructional faculty 7. Referrals to and from the Connection Program/other such South High School services and personnel	1. Telephone questionnaire to selected South High School and District Office personnel who have been involved with the Connection Program (e.g. Partnership Program, Administration, classroom instructors).
E. In what ways can the direct impact of the Connection on high-risk youth be assessed?	

QUESTIONS	METHODS
1. School dropout reduction 2. Employment 3. Fewer imvolvements with juvenile court system 4. Other	1. Follow-up of Connection clients. a) School dropouts - relate to South High dropout rate b) Employment stability c) Number of court and police involvements (gather at end of year)
F. How has the Connection Program related to and cooperated with other agencies and programs in the South Minneapolis community?	
1. Social service agencies 2. Governmental agencies (e.g. CETA) 3. Referrals to and from the Connection Program/other South Minneapolis community agencies.	1. Telephone questionnaire to selected community agencies and services.
G. To what extent have the Connection Program components served high-risk youth?	
1. Educational 2. Employment a) Pre-employment class b) World of Work seminar c) Job placements 3. Chemical Awareness 4. Paraprofessional advocacy and services 5. Transition of clients from Connection 6. Client monitoring and ATLAS systems	1-5. Client utilization of various components. 6. Impact of client monitoring and ATLAS on youth served.

QUESTIONS	METHODS
H. To what extent have employers of Connection clients been utilized and satisfied?	
1. Number and types of employers 2. Number and types of Connection clients 3. Employer satisfaction with clients 4. Retention of Connection clients with employers	1. Number and type of employers used. 2. Employer satisfaction questionnaire with Connection clients. 3. Persistence of Connection clients with employer.
I. How has the Connection Program as a program functioned?	
1. Connection employees a) Employee satisfaction b) Employee morale c) Communication networks d) Employee turnover e) Employee supervision 2. Decision-making in the Program 3. Program Development a) Start-up b) Early, middle, and late phases c) Continuation after grant monies end 4. Extent to which Connection goals have been met	1-2. Connection employee questionnaire focusing on satisfaction, morale, supervision, decision-making, communication. 3. Program development. Monthly reports. 4. Program organizational consultant evaluation. 5. Connection personnel self-evaluation on the extent to which goals have been met.
J. To what extent has the Connection Program facilitated its continuance once federal grant monies end?	1. Outreach to the community. Involving others in responsibility for the Program and serving high-risk youth. 2. Commitment of other institutions, services, and individuals.
K. To what extent has the Connection Program facilitated the cooperation of community agencies and services to better serve	

QUESTIONS	METHODS
high-risk youth?	1. Telephone questionnaire to community agencies and services. 2. Networking between community agencies.
L. To what extent has the Connection Program been able to facilitate a relationship between the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Public Schools for the common purpose of serving high-risk adolescents?	1. Telephone questionnaire to administrators from both the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Schools. 2. Commitments made by both institutions to serve high-risk youth.
M. To what extent has the Connection Program been able to predict the needs of high-risk youth and serve them either directly or indirectly in a public school setting?	1. Can social service programming for high-risk youth be effectively implemented in the public schools? Questionnaire. 2. Are the needs of high-risk youth predictable? Questionnaire. 3. How has the Connection Program changed since the initial proposal?
N. How is the Connection Program best evaluated? 1. Appropriate criteria 2. Appropriate assessments 3. Evaluation as a mechanism for change	1. Methods of evaluation. 2. Has evaluation fostered appropriate and needed change in the Connection Program?
O. How effective has the paraprofessional/ advocacy model been in serving high-risk youth? 1. Client use of paraprofessionals 2. Parental contacts 3. Cost efficiency of paraprofessionals a) Training	1. How have clients used paraprofessionals? 2. Number of client/paraprofessional contacts?

QUESTIONS	METHODS
b) Supervision	
4. Networking with other agencies and institutions	3. Number of parental contacts? 4. Cost efficiency ratio. 5. Number of institutions and agencies with which networking has been established.
P. Effectiveness of ACT Together to predict programmatic needs of high-risk youth.	
1. How helpful has ACT Together been to the Connection Program?	1. Quantity and quality of contacts with ACT Together. 2. ATLAS monitoring system. 3. Extent to which ACT Together has helped the Connection Program meet its goals. Questionnaire.

Appendix F

Connection Mid-Year Report:

Summary, Conclusions, and

Recommendations

PART III Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations [1]

The Connection Program has been an effective addition to the services offered to high-risk youth at South High School. It has served large numbers of students representing a variety of ethnic groups with multiple needs. It appears that the Program's effectiveness and ability to gain credibility within the school has improved a great deal during the last few months, and now it has stabilized. Initially, the Connection expended much energy establishing itself and building relationships within the school and the broader community. Although the Connection still needs to clarify its role and continue to work on improving its relationships in the school, much improvement has been made since summer and fall. This improvement in relationships, however, has not occurred with the City/Southside community agency and there is some question about the strength of the Connection's relationships with other community agencies.

Unfortunately, the amount of energy given to administrative start-up needs of the Program may have detracted for the quality of services initally offered to the youth clientele. Part of the start-up difficulties occurred because the Program was initiated at the end of the school year and interrupted by summer before school started again in the fall. Further, South High experienced a large increase in students fall quarter with much faculty turnover from the previous school year. Finally, the Connection, being housed in a school with other strong programs for high-risk youth, had much difficulty clarifying its role and establishing its own unique identity. Issues related to territoriality and competition between the programs existed.

The Connection staff was praised for being dedicated, hard working, and committed to serving high risk youth. The advocates were especially cited as offering a unique and needed service to the students. While some difficulties existed with respect to Program leadership and supervision, these problems have been largely rectified in recent months. It is anticipated that the staff will experience a let down as the demonstration project comes to an end, and therefore regular staff communication and strong program leadership are especially needed in the final months.

While the Connection has been intimately involved with South High School, its relationship to the University of Minnesota has been more distant and ambiguous. The University has been involved at administrative levels rather than at programmatic and service levels. Evidence suggests that the Connection staff desires a greater University involvement; however, how University personnel would be involved is uncertain.

Responses from the very limited number of students that were in-

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[1] From: The Connection Program: A Mid-Year Review by John L. Romano, February, 1983, pages 10 - 12.

terviewed suggested that the Connection is having a positive impact on them. Unfortunately, additional data about student reactions tothe Program were not available, and neither were data related to specific criteria outcomes of program effectiveness. While the employment component has been effectively implemented, the economic situation in the community has made job placements for youth difficult.

Based on data accumulated in this review, the following are recommendations for the Connection Program to consider during the remaining months of the project.

1) The Program needs to continue to improve its image and relationships both within South High School and in the community. It is important for the Program to continue to publicize its mission and goals and educate teachers and staff on how they can best use the Program.

2) A system to follow-up former Connection clients needs to be designed and implemented. Further, specific criteria outcomes of Program effectiveness need to be identified to assess the impact of the Program on high-risk youth. Data related to the ability of the Program to prevent students from dropping out of school, avoiding contact with the juvenile justice system, and being effective employees are needed in addition to the students' subjective impressions and feelings about the Connection Program. While the Program has served impressive numbers of students, little is known about the impact of the services on students.

3) A system to receive feedback from employers of Connection clients about the effectiveness of the Connection youth referred to them needs to be developed and implemented.

4) Since the Connection is a national demonstration project, careful attention needs to be given to the reasons why or why not a particular service or component is effective or ineffective. This information will be very useful for others who may want to replicate parts of the Connection Program in their own communities.

5) The Connection Program can uniquely attempt to foster a strong relationship between Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota. Perhaps stronger efforts need to be made to bring these two institutions together to better serve high-risk youth. The General College, with its strong tradition of providing post-secondary education to underprepared and bypassed student populations, and South High School, with its services and excellent programming for high-risk youth offer a natural linkage between secondary and post-secondary education. The Connection Program, because of its relationship with both South High School and the General College, should facilitate communication between these two institutions.

6) Since the federal grant monies will end on May 31, 1983,

searching for funding sources for continuation of the Program or parts of it need to be accelerated. In addition to the traditional private and public sources, other funding possibilities should be explored, such as youth enterprise programs. Given the current wave of interest in Minnesota with respect to computers and other technology, these areas may provide avenues for funding possibilities.

7) Special emphasis on helping Connection clients phase out of the Program is needed as the Program and school year end. Since some clients may have come to rely on the Program services and staff, facilitating client terminations and perhaps referrals to other agencies is most important.

8) Connection staff issues about Program termination need to be addressed in the final months of the Program. For both personal and professional reasons, the Connection staff needs time to explore feelings, attitudes, and thoughts about the program and their futures. Regular communication among staff and between staff and supervisors seems most necessary during the final months.

It must be emphasized that this mid-term review of the Connection Program has been based on objective data received through the ATLAS system and interviews with people most involved with the Connection. The people interviewed were suggested by the Connection staff and the author and they represent individuals with varying amounts of involvement with the Connection Program, from very strong involvement to minimal involvement. Nevertheless, they have presented a picture of the Connection Program from their own perspective. Also, from the many clients that the Connection has served, only a few participated in this review. Therefore, it is difficult to measure, with any degree of accuracy, client satisfaction with the Program.

The Connection Program, despite early difficulties, has developed immensely during the period reviewed. In the final months remaining, it is hoped that it will continue to improve and find ways to continue its existence, or parts of it, after federal monies cease. The general consensus among people who have been involved with the Program suggests that it is a needed program and has impacted many individuals.

Appendix G

Cover Letter, Evaluation Questionnaires, Summary Results

and

List of People Contacted

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
TWIN CITIES

Counseling and Student Development
General College
10 Nicholson Hall
216 Pillsbury Drive S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
(612) 376-2950

May 16, 1983

Dear

As you may know during the last year I have been involved in planning and implementing an evaluation of the Connection Program. A mid-year review of the Connection was completed in February, and many people assisted with that review. Now, for the final review and evaluation of the Federally funded Connection project I am asking for your co-operation; please complete the enclosed questionnaire designed to elicit your reactions to the Connection Program.

While your responses and comments are very important to the specific Connection evaluation process, perhaps of greater importance is the impact of the Connection experience on other communities throughout the United States. Others may want to consider replicating all or parts of the Connection Program and knowledge of our local experience may be very useful to them.

Your individual questionnaire will be treated confidentially, and no individual will be quoted by name in the Final Report. The code number at the top of the questionnaire will be used to facilitate follow-up of unreturned questionnaires. Please return your completed questionnaire in the stamped, addressed envelope provided.

The Final Report is projected to be completed by the end of Summer, 1983. If you or your program desire a copy, please mark your questionnaire accordingly.

Thank you for your assistance with this important phase of the Connection project. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

John L. Romano

John L. Romano, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Counseling and Student Development and
Psychoeducational Studies
(612) 376 - 2950

JLR/BJS

CONNECTION PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please record your response by circling the appropriate number to the right.

	strongly agree 1	agree 2	neutral 3	disagree 4	strongly disagree 5	can not say 6
1. The Connection has effectively carried out its goals and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The Connection has effectively served high-risk youth at South High.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The Connection has effectively communicated and cooperated with personnel and programs at South High.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The Connection has effectively communicated and cooperated with personnel and programs within the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The Connection has fostered cooperation between Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota for the purpose of serving high-risk youth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The Connection has effectively used paraprofessionals in the delivery of services to students.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	strongly agree 1	agree 2	neutral 3	disagree 4	strongly disagree 5	can not say 6
7. The Connection was able to achieve its goals and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. A program like the Connection or one similar to it to serve high risk youth belongs in the public schools.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. A program similar to the Connection should be housed at South High.	1	2	3	4	5	6

10. My knowledge of the Connection Program is:
a) very strong, b) strong, c) moderate, d) minimal, e) very minimal

11. What are the major <u>strengths</u> of the Connection?

_____

12. What are the major <u>weaknesses</u> of the Connection?

_____

13. I would appreciate other comments you care to make about the Connection. Use additional paper if necessary.

_____

_____

14. Please check here if you (or your program) desire a copy of the final report. ___

CONNECTION PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES (N=43)

		strongly agree		agree		neutral		disagree		strongly disagree		can not say	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The Connection has effectively carried out its goals and objectives.	43	12	28	19	44	2	5	2	5	0	0	8	19
2. The Connection has effectively served high-risk youth at South High.	43	19	44	15	35	3	7	3	7	0	0	3	7
3. The Connection has effectively communicated and cooperated with personnel and programs at South High.	42	8	19	21	50	6	14	2	5	1	2	4	10
4. The Connection has effectively communicated and cooperated with personnel and programs within the community.	42	6	14	18	43	5	12	3	7	3	7	7	17

Connection Program Questionnaire, cont.

		strongly agree		agree		neutral		disagree		strongly disagree		can not say	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
5. The Connection has fostered cooperation between Mpls. Public Schools and the Univ. of Minnesota for the purpose of serving high-risk youth.	43	10	23	19	44	8	19	0	0	1	2	5	12
6. The Connection has effectively used paraprofessionals in the delivery of services to students.	43	16	37	17	40	3	7	3	7	0	0	4	9
7. The Connection was able to achieve its goals and objectives.	43	12	28	18	42	3	7	2	5	0	0	8	19
8. A program like the Connection or one similar to it belongs in the public schools.	41	28	68	8	20	0	0	2	5	1	2	2	5

	strongly agree		agree		neutral		disagree		strongly disagree		can not say	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
9. A program similar to the Connection should be housed at South High.	42	23	55	10	24	1	2	2	5	1	2	5	12

10. My knowledge of the Connection Program is: (N = 43)	Number	Percentage
a) very strong	12	28%
b) strong	17	40%
c) moderate	11	26%
d) minimal	2	5%
e) very minimal	1	2%

CONNECTION PROGRAM STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

	strongly agree 1	agree 2	neutral 3	disagree 4	strongly disagree 5	can not say 6
1. Generally, I have been able to effectively carry out the goals of my component.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Generally, I have been satisfied as a staff member of the Connection.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Generally, I have been satisfied with the data gathering functions of the Connection (e.g. ATLAS system)	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Based on your experience during the previous 15 months or less, what suggestions do you have for improving the Connection Program. What advice would you give to other communities who may want to replicate the model?

CONNECTION PROGRAM STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES (N=16)

	strongly agree		agree		neutral		disagree		strongly disagree		can not say	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Generally, I have been able to effectively carry out the goals and objectives of my component.	4	25	12	75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Generally, I have been satisfied as a staff member of the Connection.	1	6	14	88	-	-	-	-	1	6	-	-
3. Generally, I have been satisfied with the data gathering functions of the Connection (e.g. ATLAS system).	5	31	8	50	1	6	1	6	-	-	1	6

Individuals Contacted For Final Evaluation

I. Connection Program

Andrew Nelson, Executive Director
Beth Wood, Program Coordinator
Mary Pat Flandrick, Paraprofessional Supervisor
Michael Rothweiler, Information Manager
Peter Heryla, Work Coordinator (Voc. Ed. Teacher)
Beverly Schilleman, Secretary/Office Manager
Delphine Quaderer, Transitional Counselor/Community Programs Assistant
Steven Day, Job Developer/Counselor
Colleen Walsh, Chemical Awareness Counselor
Lorrie Johnson, Accounts Specialist
* Bob Larsen, Job Developer
* Fred McNair, Work Coordinator (Voc. Ed. Teacher)
* Anita Macias, Paraprofessional Supervisor

John Budziszewski, Advocate/Paraprofessional
Lynette DeMarre, Advocate/Paraprofessional
Luis Gomez, Advocate/Paraprofessional
Diane Linden, Advocate/Paraprofessional
Lisa Lovlien, Advocate/Paraprofessional
Kathleen Miller, Advocate/Paraprofessional
** Judy Pilz, Advocate Paraprofessional

II. South High School (SHS) and Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS)

George Dahl, Principal, SHS
Gerald Cady, Assistant Principal, SHS
Helene Turnbull, Director, Partnership Program, SHS
Ruth Schultz, Jobs Coordinator, Partnership Program, SHS
Michael Loud, Outreach Worker, Mpls. Youth Diversion Program
Susan Ryan, Director, MICE Program, SHS
Joseph Knollenberg, Chemical Awareness Counselor, SHS
Mary Peterson, Director, Linkage Program, SHS
Richard Fredrickson, Counselor, SHS
Allen Anderson, Social Worker, SHS
** Greg Beaulieu, Indian Education Aide (Title IV), SHS
Larry Harris, Director, Legislatve & Community Relations, MPS
Daniel Loewenson, Coordinator, Chemical Awareness Programs, MPS
William Lundell, Director, Vocational/Technical Education, MPS

III. Community Agencies

James Nelson, Director, The City/Southside
Gary Clemmens, Outreach Worker, The City/Southside

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* Left the Program before the grant ended.
** Did not complete questionnaire.

Patricia Lane, Teacher, The City/Southside
Nancy Hite, Director, Mpls. Youth Diversion
** Anita Madden, Job Developer Supervisor, Mpls. Chamber of Commerce
** Sandy Opegard, Mpls. Chamber of Commerce
Chip Wells, Assistant Director, Minneapolis CETA

IV. Federal Agencies

Joyce Strom, Executive Director, ACT Together, Inc.
Terry Modulin, ACT Together, Inc.
Steven Sims, ACT Together, Inc.
Kathleen Costen, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

V. General College, University of Minnesota

Jeanne Lupton, Dean, General College
Thomas Buckley, Associate Dean, General College

** Did not complete questionnaire.

Appendix H [1]

Connection Budget

and

Direct and In-Kind Contributions

[1] Received from Mr. Andrew Nelson, Executive Director, Connection Program

Revised 3/83

BUDGET REALOCATIONS

A. Personnel:

Executive Director	$ 18,750
Programming Coordinator	17,624
Information Systems Manager	13,125
Accounts Specialist	4,375
Secretary	12,864
Paraprofessional Supervisor	9,625
Paraprofessional	20,000
TOTAL PERSONNEL	$ 96,363

B. Fringe Benefits:

Executive Director	$ 5,440
Programming Coordinator	3,650
Information Systems Manager	2,932
Accounts Specialist	1,419
Secretary	2,701
Paraprofessional Supervisor	594
Transitional Counselor	2,200
TOTAL FRINGE BENIFITS	$ 18,936

C. Travel/Transportation:

Mileage Reimbursements	$ 3,300
Conference Travel	3,700
Bus Rental	250
Vehicle Rental	800
TOTAL TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION	$ 8,050

D. Equipment:

Apple II Computer & Components	$ 4,300

E. Supplies:

Postage	$ 500
Film & Photographic	370
Office Supplies	2,500
Curriculum Supplies	600
TOTAL SUPPLIES	$ 3,970

F. Contracted Services:

Chemical Awareness Counselor	$ 17,983
Employment Specialist	
1) Vocational Education Teacher	33,333
2) Job Developer	9,600
20%-time Chemical Awareness Teacher	3,100
Mpls. Youth Diversion Contract	4,000
City/Southside Contract	4,000
Program Psychologist	0
Consultants/In-Service	1,265
Maintenance For Computer	200
Evaluation Contract	8,000
Twin City Urban Corps Program	1,000
TOTAL CONTRACTURAL	$ 82,481

G. Other:

Activities & Site Visits	$ 850
Telephone	1,500
Printing	500
Photocopying	1,100
TOTAL OTHER	$ 3,950

H.	TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES (A-G)	$ 218,050
I.	TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES	24,090
J.	TOTAL BUDGET	$ 242,140

DIRECT AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

The following contributions were obtained through interagency and inter-institution agreements negotiated on behalf of the comprehensive youth services delivered by the Connection Program.

CONTRIBUTION/SOURCE	15-MONTH BUDGET ESTIMATE
1. Job Developer Mpls. Chamber of Commerce	- salary Match contract: $2,069 - mileage allowance: $248 - office space, equipment and supplies
2. Pre-employment Trainer Mpls. Public Schools, Vocational Education	- salary match contract: $18,749 - office room and class space
3. Client work stipends Mpls. CETA	- $12,563
4. Paraprofessional wages Federal and State work/ study through the University of Minnesota	- $23,333
5. Paraprofessional wages Urban Corps Work/study	- $1,500
6. Outreach/Legal Advocates Mpls. Youth Diversion	- No cost estimate; however, without our $4,000 contribution a significantly decreased effort would have been made.
7. Outreach services and Support advocate The City/Southside	- No cost estimate; however, without our $4,000 contribution the City/Southside questioned any support services within South High School
8. Office and classroom space, office equipment South High School, Mpls. Public Schools	- $15,000
9. Chemical Awareness Counselor Mpls. Public Schools, Chemical Awareness Division	- Our contract contribution of 20% enabled South High School to retain a full-time Chemical counselor which would otherwise have

CONTRIBUTION/SOURCE	15-MONTH BUDGET ESTIMATE
	been an 80%-time position.
10. Indirect Cost Reduction University of Minnesota	- The University's usual rate of 62.5% salaries and wages was adjusted to 17.2% of direct cost minus the monies contracted for technical assistance outside the University.
11. Project conception and pre-grant development Day Community and General College	- $40,000 equivalency in time

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The financial benefits of these contributions are estimated, when calculable in excess of $181,956. Many contributions are difficult to value financially. However, these "in-kind" contributions are essential to the success of our project.

Many personal efforts from the administration and staff of the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Public Schools have been especially helpful and exemplify the commitment of both these institutions to youth.

Finally, the staff of the Connection has consistently given of themselves both in time and emotion far beyond the normal expectations of a job.

The nature of this short demonstration grant period forces rapid project evaluation. That we have experienced positive team building with our group of multi-disciplinary professionals who are on numerous payrolls and have differing political allegiance has proven that an ACT Together approach can work if the individuals involved are intentionally, unselfishly committed to youth service. We are achieving this.